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THE DECORATION OF HALLS.

BY MRS. TALBOT COKE.



RECALL a hall with mullioned windows the top panes showing coats of arms in leaded glass; the walls hung with faded brocade of dusky red, with here and there old portraits of stately dame, doughty warrior, or austere divine, all toned and mellowed to the delightful soft coloring age alone can produce in oil painting. Soft-toned Genoa velvet curtains, frayed and worn, perchance, hung in the windows, where the light

falls softly on faint colored old tapestry seats, worked by an ancestress, with Biblical subjects of diverting designs, in which squirrels of portentous size (compared to Joseph and his brethren) confab in trees with scanty leaves of enormous size, while a snail in the foreground is of such dimensions that we wonder any foliage at all survived in those days.

In such an old hall the floor will probably be covered with a Turkey carpet, which time has kindly mellowed down to the good tones lately so impossible to get in a new carpet of the kind.

Large, hospitable-looking chairs stand about, two being the now rare kind with huge wingshaped sides, which (whether geographically or angelically I cannot say) went by the name of Archangel chairs.

These last, and many smaller chairs, were covered with quaint tapestry from the same indefatigable fingers, long since moulded into dust; her portrait hangs over the high chimney-piece and gives rise to many conjectures.

I HOPE and believe the notion that the hall—be the house even a small villa—should be a room and not a mere dismal passage, is rapidly spreading among architects; and once this desideratum is arrived at we shall all be able

to show brighter, cheerier welcome to our coming guests. A very common excuse for an ugly hall (even where the speaker has recently re decorated it) is, "Well, you see, there is so much to be done elsewhere, and I thought the hall mattered least." Now this is about as valid an excuse as the usual one of a bad dresser, generally uttered in a supremely superior manner: "I don't care about spending money on my clothes."

Most estimable! But why should the said clothes be invariably ugly, incongruous, and unbecoming? The same answer holds good in both cases—no taste.

Given a woman whose harmonious, individual, and therefore "sensible" dress had been managed on as liberal a scale as you please—reduce her to poverty—would she then, because she could no longer wear magnificence, therefore relapse into the grotesque incongruity of a bad dresser? Not a bit of it; her gowns would still have the look of herself, and she would always look well. Just so would the tasteful owner of a hall,

even a mere narrow passage, recognize that a good colored paper is no dearer than a pale, vapid one; that the hall is the keynote of harmony to the whole house; and never rest until she had done her very best for it.

WE will suppose the modern hall to be that in a moderate-sized country house, and of the ordinary style, i. e., a broad passage, with a room, say, eighteen feet square, thrown into it at one side, with large Corinthian pillars here and there.

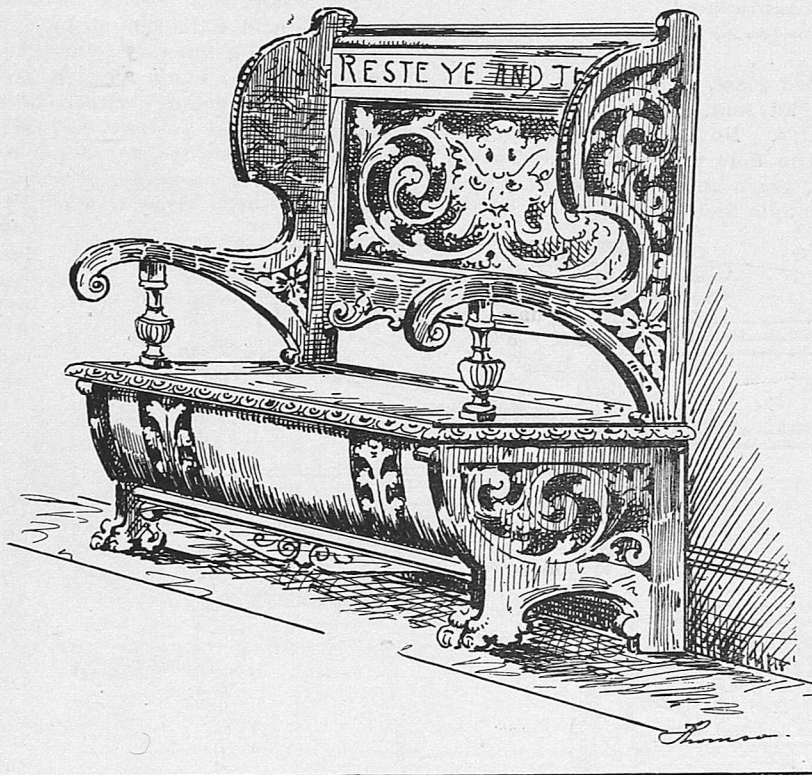
I am not sure, short of anything very grand, that this is not my favorite form of hall; it gives the idea of airiness and space to the ordinary visitor, yet by having heavy curtains (held by brass rods between the pillars at the height of about 7 feet 6 inches) you are at once, when twilight falls and the wood fire blazes up and twinkles on the brass dogs and cheery red tiles with which the recessed fire-place is lined, transforming into a cosy room, without feeling the swirl of cold air each time the front door is

opened, and our old friend the north-easter rushes playfully in to find that draught-assister we call the staircase.

I will suppose the hall to be lighted by a large square bay

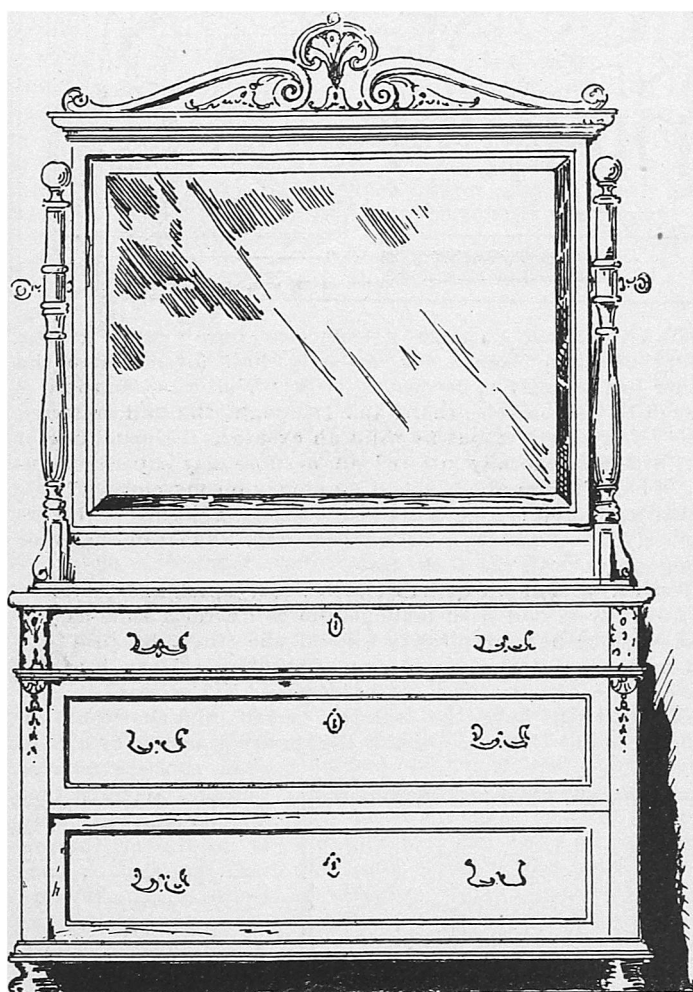
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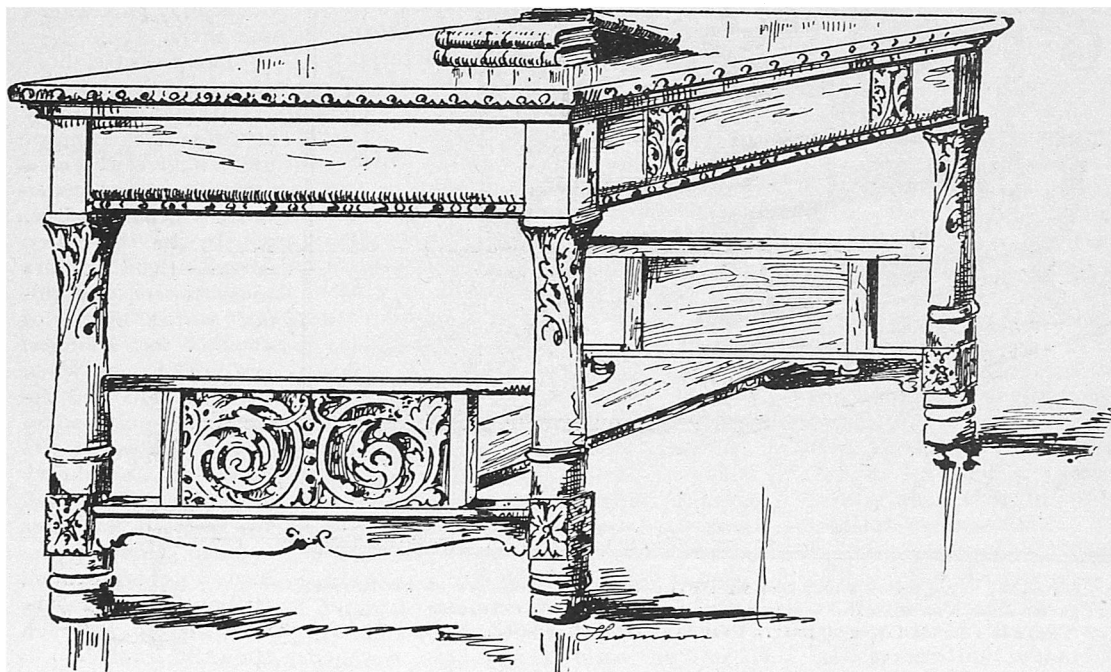
HALL SEAT IN THE RENAISSANCE STYLE, WHICH WOULD LOOK WELL MADE IN OAK FINISHED DARK BROWN OR GREEN, THE CARVING SHOULD BE BOLD AND EFFECTIVE AND RATHER COARSE IN CHARACTER. THERE IS A HINGE COVER TO SEAT. DESIGNED BY JAMES THOMSON.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



BUREAU IN MODERN RENAISSANCE STYLE, SUITABLE FOR PRODUCTION IN MAHOGANY, OAK, CHERRY OR PRIMA VERA, HANDLES IN SILVER.
DESIGNED BY JAMES THOMSON.
(For Sketch of Bedstead see May Issue.)

window, with mulloins and leaded glass, in which we hasten to put a softly-cushioned, low, broad seat, hanging the window with self colored velvety curtains. No parquet and rugs will satisfy me. I must have for the floor one of the new Turkey carpets; not one of the old red, green and blue horrors, which, even if bought when a young couple first married, would hardly



ROMANESQUE TABLE. IT SHOULD BE MADE IN OAK, FINISHED BROWN, DARK GREEN OR BLACK. THE CARVING MAY BE RATHER RUDE IN EXECUTION, DEPENDING ON GOOD SHARP OUTLINES FOR EFFECT. FOR A LIBRARY OR HALL
THIS STYLE OF TABLE IS WELL ADAPTED. DESIGNED BY JAMES THOMSON.

have toned down to even bearable coloring by their golden wedding;—but one the ground of which is ruddy gold, the pattern being in dull blue, warm Indian red, and touches of brown or bronze. The walls I shall panel with a dado of dark oak, with here and there a bookshelf projecting or a cupboard for odds and ends; the top of the dado will be a shelf for pottery, shields, and all the quaint gatherings of foreign travel.

The wall above is covered with a richly decorated Tyne-castle tapestry, or highly embossed red and gold leather paper, the raftered ceiling being filled with a bold-patterned yellow flock paper. The mantel-piece is high, reaching even above the high dados; the fender brass, in large scrolls and devices.

On one side of the fire stands a softly-cushioned Chester-field couch, covered with a large patterned tawney velvet. I live well. At the end farthest from the fire a tall stand, with black carved elephants' heads and gleaming white tusks, holds a large copper pot and spreading palm large enough to overshadow the end of the couch. Near this stands a big, cosey grandfather's chair in blue and gold tapestry; a large, red shaded lamp hangs over a carved oak centre table, laden with many a magazine and weekly paper; small tables, and carved oak Glastonbury stools stand about near other inviting-looking chairs; the panels are lighted up here and there with deftly arranged groups of glittering weapons, and by an occasional scone of beaten brass. Truly a pleasant, and withal thoroughly decorative *mise en scene*.

LET us take note of the room into which we sometimes enter on calling at a country house. Say it is some sixteen feet square, with a window each side of the door, and an arch leading to the stairs, facing you as you come in. The wall has a paneled dado of just the ugly height, i. e., some thirty inches, painted gray, and the coloring of the whole place is familiar to many of us.

The wall is covered with a grey and white paper, the design comprising birds and flowers; the only color being a "touching up" of the flowers and leaves with an especially aggressive pink. The floor is laid with grey and white oil-cloth; maroon rep curtains hang in the windows;—but why harrow up the feelings of artistic readers with horrors they can all shudderingly recall?

The cold walls should be covered with a warm terra cotta paper—only a few pence the piece, but the design a joy to live with—showing naught but a tangle blade-like foliage all over, the pattern being outlined in soft cream; this leads up to a carefully toned yellowy cornice; and a ceiling paper strewn with soft, flatly treated Japanese blooms in pink and yellow, completes the harmony. The paint is my special shade, "Japanese ivory"—like ivory touched by the caressing hand of Time—and the dado is *raised* eighteen inches by half a width of bold patterned ivory and gold leather paper, finished off at the top with a wooden rail, painted, of course, to match the rest of the woodwork.

Already has disappeared the chilly *coup d'œil* which used to greet one on opening the hall door; but wait till we take up the shabby oil-cloth, stain a border all round the floor, and stretch an effective, yet inexpensive and richly tinted Chlidema carpet over the centre—till we hang soft, greeny-blue serge curtains in the windows; cover the big frayed maroon morocco armchairs with large patterned blue and gold and terra cotta tapestry; put a pretty cloth and yellow pot with *Aspidestra* on it;—and though there is yet much to be done, much to be added gradually till perfection is reached, there will already be a pretty welcome for the coming guest.